

POLICEMEN AND FIREMEN'S RELIEF FUND OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

DECEMBER 31, 1924.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the
state of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. GIBSON, from the Committee on the District of Columbia
submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 5327]

The Committee on the District of Columbia, to whom was recom-
mitted the bill (H. R. 5327) to provide for the payment to the retired
members of the police and fire departments of the District of Colum-
bia the balance of retirement pay past due to them but unpaid from
January 1, 1911, to July 30, 1915, having reconsidered the same,
recommend that it do pass, amended as follows:

On page 2, line 1, after the word "is," strike out the words "appro-
priated and."

On page 2, line 4, after the word "authorized," strike out the words
"and directed."

This bill proposes to pay certain retired members of the police and
fire departments of the District of Columbia, and the widows and
minor children of deceased members, the deficiency in monthly pay-
ments of pension allowances between January 1, 1911, and July 30,
1915. The funds available to cover that period were insufficient to
the extent of \$68,425.06 to pay the allowances granted them by the
commissioners, pursuant to authority of law.

September 1, 1916, Congress, by the provisions of the District of
Columbia appropriation act, abolished the then existing relief funds
for the police and fire departments and consolidated them into one
under the title of the "Policemen and firemen's relief fund, District
of Columbia." This act of Congress placed the pension system of
these departments on a sound financial basis, and all deficiencies are
taken care of.

In the period previous to September 1, 1916, the ability of the
commissioners to pay the pension allowances was governed by the
amount of moneys annually collected from the several sources.

When there was a deficiency the commissioners were unable to pay. There was a deficiency between June 1, 1894, and May 31, 1896. Payment of this was authorized by Congress under the act of March 4, 1909.

Prior to September 1, 1916, the policemen and firemen's relief funds were made up of a deduction of \$1 a month from the pay of officers and members of the two departments, fines imposed upon such members for infractions of the regulations, the annual tax on dogs, police court fines, gifts, and donations.

The authorizations proposed by this bill are to be paid wholly from the revenues of the District of Columbia. The bill has been submitted to the Bureau of the Budget and is not in conflict with the financial program of the President. It is recommended by the Commissioners of the District of Columbia, as is shown by the following letter:

COMMISSIONERS DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,
Washington, February 8, 1924.

HON. STUART F. REED,

Chairman Committee on the District of Columbia,

House of Representatives.

SIR: The Commissioners of the District of Columbia have the honor to submit the following on House bill 5327, Sixty-eighth Congress, first session, entitled "A bill to provide for the payment to the retired members of the police and fire departments of the District of Columbia the balance of retirement pay past due but unpaid from January 1, 1911, to July 30, 1915," which you referred to them for consideration and report.

It is proposed by the terms of this bill to pay to certain retired members of the police and fire departments of the District of Columbia, and to widows and minor children of deceased members, the deficiency in monthly payments of pension allowances covering the period between January 1, 1911, and July 30, 1915. During the period stated, the funds available by law for the payment of policemen and firemen's pensions were insufficient to the extent of \$68,425.06 to pay in full to the several pensioners the respective pension allowances granted them by the commissioners pursuant to authority of law.

Prior to September 1, 1916, the policemen and firemen's relief funds were made up of a deduction of \$1 per month from the pay of officers and members of the two departments, fines imposed upon such members for infractions of the regulations, the annual tax on dogs, police-court fines, and gifts, donations, etc.

Beginning with September 1, 1916, Congress, by the terms of the District of Columbia appropriation act approved on that date, abolished the then existing two separate relief funds, one each for the police and fire departments, and consolidated the two funds in one under the title of the "Policemen and firemen's relief fund, District of Columbia."

In addition to certain moneys represented by fines imposed by the commissioners upon members of the police and fire departments by way of discipline, rewards, proceeds of gifts, and a deduction of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the monthly pay of officers and members of the two departments, the law further authorized the commissioners to direct the collector of taxes of the District of Columbia to pay into the Treasury of the United States from time to time, out of the general revenue of the District of Columbia collected by him, such sums as might be necessary to meet deficiencies in the policemen and firemen's relief fund.

Under this law Congress for the first time placed the pension system of the police and fire departments on a sound and stable financial basis. In its practical operation the amounts necessary to be credited to the policemen and firemen's relief fund to prevent deficiencies therein become a first lien on the general revenues of the District of Columbia collected by the collector of taxes.

But in the period preceding September 1, 1916, the ability of the commissioners to pay in full pension allowances was governed solely by the amount of moneys annually collected from the several sources indicated. As far back as March 4, 1909, Congress passed an act (35 Stat. 1066) authorizing the payment of pension deficiencies for the period between June 1, 1894, and May 31, 1896. This appropriation, indefinite in amount, was made wholly from the revenues of

the District of Columbia. The appropriation proposed by H. R. 5327, again indefinite in amount, is also proposed to be paid wholly from the revenues of the District of Columbia. As a matter of law the District of Columbia is required to pay pension and relief allowances and expenses incurred in connection with the treatment of members of the police and fire departments disabled in the performance of duty entirely from the revenues of the District. The United States has never shared any part of this expense. At the present time the cost of operating the policemen and firemen's relief fund approximates \$500,000 annually.

While the payments proposed to be made by the bill are not legal obligations of the District of Columbia, they are moral obligations that the District of Columbia should discharge. The commissioners have on a number of occasions recommended an appropriation wholly from the revenues of the District, at times in the regular annual estimates of the District and at other times in deficiency estimates, to pay the proportion of pensions withheld during the period in question. On several occasions the Senate has included an item in the District bill for this purpose, but the House of Representatives in conference has always objected to such an appropriation being made, with the result that the sum of \$68,425.06 is still morally due the several pensioners involved.

The bill has been submitted to the Bureau of the Budget and the Director of the Budget has informed the commissioners that it is not in conflict with the financial program of the President.

The commissioners recommend favorable action on the bill, but suggest that it be amended as follows:

On page 1, line 7, after the figures "1915," add the following: "amounting to \$68,425.06."

On page 1, line 8, insert after the words "hereby is" the words "appropriated and."

Very respectfully,

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,
By CUNO H. RUDOLPH, *President*.



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